

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Original) A method comprising:
  - identifying a first portion of a first message in a first slice of a switch, the first message associated with a first priority, the first portion of the first message including a first routing portion specifying a network resource;
  - identifying a second portion of the first message in a second slice of the switch, the second portion of the first message including the first routing portion;
  - identifying a first portion of a second message in the first slice, the second message associated with a second priority, the first portion of the second message including a second routing portion specifying the network resource;
  - identifying a second portion of the second message in the second slice, the second portion of the second message including the second routing portion;
  - selecting, independently in each slice, the same one of the first and second messages based on the first and second priorities;
  - sending the first portion of the selected message from the first slice to the network resource specified by the one of the first and second routing portions corresponding to the selected message; and
  - sending the second portion of the selected message from the second slice to the network resource specified by the one of the first and second routing portions corresponding to the selected message.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - associating the first and second priorities with the first and second messages based on the ages of the first and second messages.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

dividing each message to create the first and second portions;

sending the first portions to the first slice; and  
sending the second portions to the second slice.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the network resource is a memory resource.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the network resource is a processor.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the network resource is a crossbar.

7. (Original) A method for use in a first slice of a switch having first and second slices, comprising:

identifying a first portion of a first message, the first message associated with a first priority, the first portion of the first message including a first routing portion specifying a network resource, wherein a second portion of the first message resides in the second slice, the second portion of the first message including the first routing portion;

identifying a first portion of a second message in the first slice, the second message associated with a second priority, the first portion of the second message including a second routing portion specifying the network resource, wherein a second portion of the second message resides in the second slice, the second portion of the second message including the second routing portion;

selecting one of the first and second messages based on the first and second priorities, wherein the second slice independently selects the same one of the first and second messages based on the first and second priorities; and

sending the first portion of the selected message from the first slice to the network resource specified by the one of the first and second routing portions corresponding to the selected message; and wherein

the second slice sends the second portion of the selected message from the second slice to the network resource specified by the one of the first and second routing portions corresponding to the selected message.

8. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the network resource is a memory resource.

9. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the network resource is a processor.

10. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the network resource is a crossbar.

11. (Original) An apparatus comprising:

means for identifying a first portion of a first message in a first slice of a switch, the first message associated with a first priority, the first portion of the first message including a first routing portion specifying a network resource;

means for identifying a second portion of the first message in a second slice of the switch, the second portion of the first message including the first routing portion;

means for identifying a first portion of a second message in the first slice, the second message associated with a second priority, the first portion of the second message including a second routing portion specifying the network resource;

means for identifying a second portion of the second message in the second slice, the second portion of the second message including the second routing portion;

means for selecting, independently in each slice, the same one of the first and second messages based on the first and second priorities;

means for sending the first portion of the selected message from the first slice to the network resource specified by the one of the first and second routing portions corresponding to the selected message; and

means for sending the second portion of the selected message from the second slice to the network resource specified by the one of the first and second routing portions

corresponding to the selected message.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:  
means for associating the first and second priorities with the first and  
second messages based on the ages of the first and second messages.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:  
means for dividing each message to create the first and second  
portions;  
means for sending the first portions to the first slice; and  
means for sending the second portions to the second slice.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the network resource is a  
memory resource.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the network resource is a  
processor.

16. (Original) An apparatus of claim 1, wherein the network resource is a  
crossbar.

17. (Original) An apparatus for use in a first slice of a switch having first  
and second slices, comprising:  
means for identifying a first portion of a first message, the first message  
associated with a first priority, the first portion of the first message including a first routing  
portion specifying a network resource, wherein a second portion of the first message resides  
in the second slice, the second portion of the first message including the first routing portion;  
means for identifying a first portion of a second message in the first slice, the  
second message associated with a second priority, the first portion of the second message  
including a second routing portion specifying the network resource, wherein a second portion of

the second message resides in the second slice, the second portion of the second message including the second routing portion;

means for selecting one of the first and second messages based on the first and second priorities, wherein the second slice independently selects the same one of the first and second messages based on the first and second priorities; and

means for sending the first portion of the selected message from the first slice to the network resource specified by the one of the first and second routing portions corresponding to the selected message; and wherein

the second slice sends the second portion of the selected message from the second slice to the network resource specified by the one of the first and second routing portions corresponding to the selected message.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the network resource is a memory resource.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the network resource is a processor.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the network resource is a crossbar.